(b) whether different directions have been issued for different banks regarding appointment on compassionate grounds; if so, the directives for UCO Bank;

(c) the number of Bank-officials who died during 1997-1998 in North Zone of UCO Bank;

(d) whether UCO Bank has appointed the dependents of deceased members on compassionate grounds, during the above period; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor and the number of cases pending?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Appointments on compassionate grounds in nationalised banks (including UCO Bank) are made by the bank concerned, with the approval of the competent authority, as per the scheme formulated by them for such appointments with the approval of their Boards, keeping in view the guidelines issued by the Government, from time to time.

(c) According to UCO Bank, their 13 bank officials died in the Northern Zone from January, 1997 to December, 1998.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) UCO Bank has further reported that the bank could not give appointment to the wholly dependants of the deceased from the middle of May, 1997 to December, 1998 since the bank was in the process of amending their existing scheme in the light of Supreme Court judgement. The revised scheme has been approved by the Board of the Bank on 7.9.1999 and the branches/offices of the bank have been advised to send the applications of the wholly dependants of the deceased for consideration of the bank as per the revised scheme. According to the bank 19 cases relating to the Northern Zone are pending.

Financial crisis being faced by Assam Government

2076. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to serious financial crisis, the

Assam Government has not been able to pay their employees salaries for months together;

(b) whether it is also a fact that as a result of agitation by the employees against non-payment of their salaries, the Administration has totally collapsed resulting into law and order problem; and

(c) whether Government propose to declare financial emergency in Assam and extend suitable financial help to it to overcome its financial difficulties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) The State of Assam is passing through acute financial crisis for last several years. They are frequently running into overdraft and their payments are being suspended by the RBI in accordance with the existing overdraft policy. As reported by the State Government, there was no problem for payment of salary except for payment of salary of October, 1999 in November, 1999 which could be paid only on 12.11.1999.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) There is no proposal to declare financial emergency in Assam. Financial assistance is extended to the State Government by advancing their entitlements, providing Ways and Means, Advances if needed, and at times postponing recoveries of the State's dues payable to Ministry of Finance.

Branches of Banks in Vikaspuri and Chandni Chowk

2077. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the criteria for opening of new branches by the public sector banks;

(b) what are the new branches proposed to be opened by the various Nationalised Banks in Vikaspuri and Chandni Chowk during next year; and

(c) in how many cases the license for opening of branches has been granted and in how many such cases the banks have not opened